Moral Insanity or Insane Morality

In `Case of Moral Mania?'[xxii] written in 1863, Workman seems especially sceptical of the `purity' of the disease, implicit in which is the `purity' of insanity itself. Workman has been able to account for other cases of alleged `moral insanity' in terms of what he calls an `intellectual lesion' (410).[xxiii] Even the `purest' cases of `Moral Insanity' eventually degenerate into `unequivocal intellectual insanity' (410), as we would expect `unless, indeed, we can believe that the mind is but a loose conglomeration of sovereign and independent faculties or states, any one or more of which may, when it sees fit, secede from the union' (411) -- a blatant appeal to the Federalist side in the Civil War then raging in the United States.[xxiv]

Workman goes to some length to emphasize the regularity of his patient's life, and her good performance at school where her teachers found her `very clever and attentive' (406), at least before her first `attack': `Her previous habits of life were certified to have been regular' (406). The initial attack lasts for some six months and consists of `K.S.' destroying her clothing by `cutting out pieces, generally of circular shape, with scissors' -- not without striking indications of the `order and method' (406) which Workman finds inconsistent with `genuine insanity'.[xxv] At the same time Workman suggests that K.S.'s mother might be too hostile to K.S. to be objective: `A long detail of other bad deeds was supplied by the mother, sufficient to qualify a dozen candidates for asylum lodgment' (406). He himself resolves to be fair and impartial:

> Notwithstanding the very unpleasant impression made one my mind by the preceding history, I resolved to treat the girl according to her present conduct, and practically to ignore the entire bill presented by the physicians and the mother. (407)

After three months at the Asylum, K.S. does not appear to be ill; Workman asks her to write to her mother, to inform her that there seems to be `no necessity for her [daughter's] further detention' (407). When the mother fails to